

## CLAIM AMENDMENTS

1           1. (currently amended) A method for controlling the  
2 position of a mandrel (10) that is mounted in a hydraulic extrusion  
3 apparatus comprising a cylinder and a piston that form a piercing  
4 cylinder (8), of an extrusion press for producing pipes (2) that  
5 are extruded from billets (4) that are loaded into a holder (5)  
6 mounted upstream from the extrusion die (3) and pierced by means of  
7 the mandrel (10), ~~characterized in that~~ wherein the piercing  
8 cylinder (8) is directly driven by pumps (11) that are adjusted to  
9 a defined pumping volume as a function of the extrusion speed and  
10 that a further pumping volume is added to the previously computed  
11 pump conveying volume, a control valve (16) acting upon the front  
12 ring compartment (12) of the piercing cylinder (8) being connected  
13 to a sump tank (17) for the purpose of controlling the position of  
14 the mandrel (10).

1           2. (currently amended) The method according to claim 1,  
2 ~~characterized in that~~ wherein the outlet pressure of the piercing  
3 cylinder (8) is adjusted to a defined pressure.

1           3. (currently amended) The method according to claim 1  
2 [[or 2]], ~~characterized in that~~ wherein the pressure levels in both  
3 sides of the piercing cylinder (8) are monitored.

1                   4. (new) A method of operating a tube-extrusion press  
2     having  
3                   a die having a cavity;  
4                   a holder for pressing a billet forward through the die;  
5                   a mandrel shiftable forward and backward and having a  
6     front end positionable in the die, whereby the billet pressed into  
7     the die around the mandrel is deformed into a tube;  
8                   a hydraulic cylinder having a piston connected to the  
9     mandrel and shiftable therewith, the cylinder defining a front ring  
10    compartment between the piston and the die and a rear compartment;  
11                  a pump for supplying pressure to the cylinder; and  
12                  a tank connectable to the cylinder,  
13    the method comprising the steps of:  
14                  operating the pump such that it supplies a pressure in  
15    excess of what is needed to prevent forward movement of the mandrel  
16    into the die during extrusion; and  
17                  bleeding pressure from the front compartment through a  
18    control valve to a tank to control the position of the mandrel  
19    relative to the die.

1                   5. (new) The method defined in claim 4, further  
2    comprising the step of  
3                   maintaining the outlet pressure of the cylinder at a  
4    fixed pressure.

1                   6. (new) The method defined in claim 4, further  
2   comprising the steps of:  
3                   monitoring the pressures in the front and rear  
4   compartments and controlling the pump in accordance therewith.